

**From:** Lorin Olsen  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 11/17/01 11:21am  
**Subject:** US v. Microsoft: Concerns of a Consumer

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been an active computer user since 1976. My computer experiences started with IBM aminframes (S/360 168) but have included every major microprocessor offering from Intel and Motorola. In that time, I have used most every major operating system created - including all of the products released by Microsoft.

As an interested consumer who has spent many dollars on Microsoft products, I have been intenesely interested inthe ongoing U.S. v. Microsoft case. As a consumer, I have felt compelled to use Microsoft products and upgrade according to their schedule. I used to be a very satisfied Netscape user. But I found that as I used Netscape, more and more services were bundled with features that required Internet Explorer. With each successive Microsoft Office purchase, I have felt compelled to upgrade or not stay compatible. With Windows XP, Microsoft has deployed a product that all butr requires subscribing to Microsoft's service offerings (MSN Messenger, Passport). In short, I have felt that my choices have been severely constrained by the practices of Microsoft.

My continuing hope is that whatever penalties or settlement is imposed, Microsoft's core behavior can be modified. As a consumer, I want ot have more choices not less. I want to know that my investment in Real Networks software (Real Player and Real Jukebox) won't be lost because Microsoft bundled a free version of multimedia tools. As a ZoneAlarm Pro user, I want to know that my investment won't be stranded because Microsoft bundles a free product in the operating system. My larger concerns are that once Microssoft eliminates competition (in music, video, security, etc) that I won't be forced to buy products from the only remaining vendor - Microsoft. Worse still, I don't want Microsoft to eliminate its competition and then I cannot use alternative computing platforms (e.g., Linux) simply because the only existing tools are for Windows platforms.

Finally, I hate to think of a computing industry that does not have innovation. For years, computers have been the means of transforming our lives and increasing our productivity. While Microsoft maintains monopoly control on the industry, innovation will be stifled. There is no incentive for the monopolist to innnovate. Rather, there is every incentive to make only marginal changes - thus protecting the revenue stream. This means that truly new ideas won't come from Microsoft. This is certainly the case over the past few years. But when real innovation is introduced, Microsoft has been swift to embrace these things and elminate the innovators (by unfair competition or by acquisition). In short, unless Microsoft's behavior is changed, I fear that consumers will not see any real innovation.

All you have to do to see that this trend is look at the differences between Windows 95 and Windows XP. Apart form some minor cosmetic changes, the interface is nearly identical. After seven years, where are the innovations? Where is the voice control? Where are the effective "equal access" tools?

As a citizen, a consumer, and a computer professional, I hope that the Department of Justice works to ensure real competition. Do not sacrifice true competition because of some vain hope that Microsoft will spare the economy after 9-11. It won't. In fact, real competition is the only thing that will completely revitalize the technology sector.

Sincerely,

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